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THE MENACE OF THE MOB

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The Menace of the Mob

By

DMITRI MEREJKOVSKI

Translated from the Russian
By
BERNARD GUILBERT GUERNEY

NICHOLAS L. BROWN
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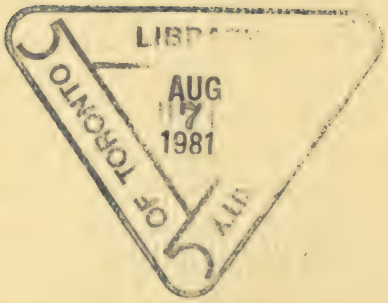
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INTRODUCTION

To say that the world to-day is passing through the most crucial period of all history is, of course, a commonplace; but the fact will, none the less, bear constant reiteration.

Everything is seething and in a turmoil; there are wars and rumors of wars; the world is ill and bewildered. Yet, though there are many men crying in this wilderness—how many are there who are true prophets; and how many of these are not merely crying, but also pointing a way out of the wilderness?

It is little short of astonishing to see how many of the warnings in *The Menace of the Mob* have come true. There is scarce a line where a pin would not prick upon a prophecy fulfilled. And, were we to use it as a volume for *sortes*—there is scarce a line that is not pregnant with other forewarnings, still more dire. "There shall be a slaughter the like of which has never been before" —to which the Great World War is, perhaps, as but the blossom to the fruit.

Kuprin, in one of his impressionistic sketches,

describes a rural school recitation of the fable of the grasshopper and the ant. He writes:

"An oppressive, sad, and fearful thought seemed to unfold itself in my mind. 'Here,' I thought, 'stand we, a small group of intelligents, face to face with a numberless people, the most enigmatic, the greatest and the most oppressed on earth. What binds us to them? Nothing. Neither tongue, nor faith, nor work, nor art. Our poetry is laughable to them, as nonsensical and incomprehensible as to a child. Our refined painting is to them a useless and undecipherable daubing. Our search for a God and our creation of a God is sheer raving to them who believe equally holily in a calendar saint and in the hobgoblin who lives in the bath-house. Our music seems dreary noise to them. Our science is insufficient for them. Our complicated labor is ludicrous and pitiful to them, so wise, patient, and simple is the cruel face of nature to the tiller. Yes—on the terrible day of reckoning, what shall we say to this infant and beast, this sage and animal, this giant numbering many millions? Nothing. We shall say: 'We sang the summer through,' and they will answer, with the cunning smile of the peasant: 'Then go and dance a bit. . . .'"

Has the terrible day of reckoning come? Just

as the above gives us a picture of the position of the cultured classes—not only in Russia, but throughout the world—helpless before the turbulent masses, so every forewarning of Merejkovski's applies *not only to Russia, but to all the world.*

Dmitri Sergeivitch Merejkovski was born August 14, 1865, on one of the small islands near St. Petersburg. He was the youngest son of Sergeii Ivanovitch Merejkovski, and Varvara Vasilievna, *née* Chestrokova. He had three sisters and five brothers, and was his mother's favorite son; writing of his mother, he acknowledges that "if there is any good in me, I have her to thank for it." His father, however, was very stern; and later on, when he speaks of his education, he plainly states that he owes as little to his schooling as to his father. When his brother Constantin proved to be a nihilist, the father, who considered nihilists as not even human beings (*Unmenschen*), drove him out of the house, despite the mother's pleading.

The melancholy pervading the old marshy park with its wooded parts, its ponds, and the view of the sea, could not but exert its influence upon his childhood—he tells us that he was shy and secretive as a school-boy; nor must we forget "the holy legends and folk-tales" of his old nurse—even before thirteen he was full of mysticism, and wrote

poetry. His first critical effort was written also at about the same age.

And it is significant that, as a child, his winters were spent in an old house built at the time of Peter the Great, and within sight of his palace, his hut, and his church.

He received his education at the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties—the days of the severest classicism. In 1884 he graduated from the Gymnasia, and entered the Historical-Philosophical course at the University of St. Petersburg. There he first came in contact with the government: he organized a Molière club, which was duly raided by the political police, while he escaped exile only through the influence of his father. He tells us frankly that he owes his freedom of speech throughout his career only to a lucky chance.

While in the University, he took up positivism in earnest, and studied Spencer, Comte, Mill, and Darwin. "But being religious," he writes, "I surmised darkly the instability of the positivistic philosophy. I pondered, but found no way out, and was beset with pains and doubts." The way out is bodied forth most definitely in *The Menace of the Mob*, but it is shown, in greater or lesser degree, in practically all of his other writings as well. But this discovery was to be the result of later years.

In 1880 he met Dostoievsky, whom his father knew; also Nadson, the poet, whom he grew to love as a brother, and with whom he held endless religious disputes. At the house of Plescheieff, the editor, he met the great satirical writer, Schedrin-Saltykoff—also at this period.

Mme. Davidoff, the wife of the well-known musician and director of the Conservatory of St. Petersburg, had a *salon* frequented by all the celebrities of that day. It was there that he met Goncharov—"a blind, gray old man"—and the poets Maikov and Polonsky; later on—Korolenko, Garshin, Michailovsky and Uspenski. The last two he calls his first real teachers; Michailovsky, he admits, exercised a great influence on his life and personality. During a visit to Uspenski, he argued the whole night through with his host over "a question which concerned me in the highest degree—the religious spirit in life."

Influenced by Tolstoy's *Confessions*, he undertakes a journey on foot through the Volga district, conversing with peasants whenever an opportunity presented itself. He is constantly haunted by the dim surmise that naturalistic positivism is not the ultimate truth. It was also at this period that he wanted to become a country school-teacher, but "was laughed out of it."

Merejkovski made his first appearance in print in 1882, when a poem of his appeared in *The Illustrated Survey*, edited by Schiller-Michailov. His later works appeared in *Notes of the Fatherland*. To the *Northern Messenger* he contributed a "ponderous dramatic poem, *Sylvia*," and an essay on Chekhov, who was just appearing then, and was as yet unrecognized.

Under the influence of Dostoievsky, and several foreign poets, such as Baudelaire and Poe, Merejkovski has championed the moderns, but not so much the decadents as the symbolists. He gave the title of *Symbols* to a volume of his verse appearing in 1890, and was the first to bring the word "symbol" into Russian literature.

After finishing the University, he went on a trip to the Caucasus, where he met the famous poetess, Hippius, and proposed to her. They were married at Tiflis the following winter, and returned to St. Petersburg.

His mother died shortly after. "I found that this death," he writes, "the illness of my wife, and other calamities were the foundation of the literary strain I underwent. The accusation that my religiousness is derived from books is false."

The volume *Eternal Journeys*, and several translations of old Greek dramas were the fruit of his

journeys in Rome, Florence, Taormina, Athens, and Constantinople.

In 1893 he commenced the trilogy of *Christ and Anti-Christ*, which took twelve years to complete. *Julian the Apostate* was refused everywhere, but was finally accepted by the *Northern Messenger*—"and there the novel was taken really only through pity." Further he tells us: "I was especially poorly welcomed in Russian literature, and to this day have to withstand a certain attitude of enmity. I can already celebrate my twenty-fifth anniversary of unfair persecution on the part of Russian critics."

It was also at the end of the nineties that he founded a religious and philosophical society, the first impulse for which he received from his wife. Needless to say, the society was suppressed.

Merejkovski admits that he was not quite just in his book on Tolstoy. In 1914, in company with his wife, he visited Yasnaya Poliana. They found Tolstoy very friendly, and held religious disputes with him. "At parting he looked at me with his good-natured, rather uncanny, small eyes, like those of a bear. 'I have heard that you don't like me. I am glad that is not so.'"

All of his activities in 1905–1906 helped variously in his development. He does not, however,

consider his development completed as yet, as he tells us in an autobiographical sketch published in 1914, from which these biographical data have been taken.

After the Moscow uprising, Merejkovski went to Paris with his wife. There he published, in French, *The Czar and The Revolution*, in collaboration with Philosoff. The drama of *Paul I* was presented, also in 1908, and was forbidden by the authorities after the first performance. The accusation of *lèse majesté* was withdrawn only four years later. Upon his return to Russia during 1908, the manuscript of *Alexander I* was confiscated.

The deep connection of political Russia with religion has become fully apparent to Merejkovski, and he has learned, "not abstractedly, but with flesh and soul, that in Russia orthodoxy and the existing order are inseparably bound up with one another, and that we can attain to a new conception of Christianity only if both autocracy and orthodoxy are equaly discarded."

That is why, perhaps, he considers the Russian revolutionaries he met in Paris as the best of all the Russians he had ever seen in his life, and is still of the same opinion.

The reader of these essays cannot but perceive

Merejkovski's supreme and unerring insight into the Russian heart and mind. All the books written about Russia by outsiders cannot tell us one jot as much as the self-analytical study in contrasts in *The Blossoms of Bourgeoisie.* Nor can there be any doubt of his sincerity, his earnestness—he spares himself not one whit in *When Christ Shall Rise Again*—one of the most powerful pleas in all literature against a universal infamy.

He is not a logician, perhaps; he is frankly a mystic, and his appeal is to a more poetical factor than logic—emotion. Yet though he may probe our wounds mercilessly, he has a good oil which heals to offer us, if we will but take it. All his works, practically, are imbued with the same spirit and purpose—Christ and Christianity. He is consistently a Christian. One cannot sum up his attitude and aims better than in his own words, in conclusion to his foreword to the trilogy of *Christ and Anti-Christ:*

"I would like to dedicate my labor—our labor —to that generation of Russian people which shall understand, that Christianity not only has been, but is and shall be; that Christ is not only a perfect but a constantly growing Truth; that the liberation of Russia, the liberation of the world, cannot take place otherwise than in the name of Christ."

There are many prophets crying in the wilderness; if there be among them one who does not merely cry, but also points a way out of the wilderness, shall we not heed and follow him, if he be also a seer whose previous prophecies have been fulfilled?

BERNARD GUILBERT GUERNEY.

New York City,
October, 1920

THE MENACE OF THE MOB

I

"BOURGEOISIE will conquer, and must conquer," wrote Hertzen in 1864, in his essay, *Ends and Beginnings*. "Yes, my dear friend, it is time to come to the calm and submissive realization that bourgeoisie *is the final form of civilization in the South.*"

Hertzen can hardly be suspected of a lack of love for Europe. For he is precisely one of those Russians who, as Dostoievsky expresses it, have "two native lands: our Russia and Europe." Perhaps he did not know himself which he loved more —Russia or Europe. Like his friend Bakunin, he was convinced that the final liberation is the deed not of any single nation, but of all the nations together, of all mankind; and that a nation can liberate itself completely only by renouncing its national individualism and entering the circle of the life of all mankind. "Universal Humanity," which was an æsthetic contemplation to Pushkin, in the case of Hertzen becomes a life influence, a grand exploit. He sacrificed his love for Russia to his

love for Europe, not in the abstract but in reality. He became a life-long exile for Europe, he lived for her, and he was ready to die for her. In his periods of dejection and disenchantment he regretted not having taken the rifle offered to him by a workman at the time of the revolution of 1848 in Paris, and not dying at the barricades.

If such a man as this had come to doubt in Europe, it was not because he had little faith in it, but because he had too much. And when he pronounces his sentence: "I see the inevitable ruin of old Europe, and regret nothing in existence;" when he asserts that within the portals of the old world is "not Catiline, but Death," and on his brow the Ciceronian "*vixerunt*"—then, though one may not accept this sentence,—I personally do not accept it, —one cannot but admit that, coming from the lips of Hertzen, it has a fearful weight.

In support of his reasonings anent the inevitable victory of bourgeoisie in Europe, Hertzen refers to one of the noblest representatives of European culture, to one of its "knights beyond fear or reproach"—to John Stuart Mill.

"Bourgeoisie," says Hertzen, "is no other than the sovereign mob of John Stuart Mill's 'conglomerated mediocrity,' which reigns over all things,— the mob without ignorance, but without education

as well. . . . Mill beholds everything around him becoming vulgar, small; he looks with despair upon these crushing masses of some prolific spawn, compressed out of the myriads of bourgeois shallowness. . . . He does not at all exaggerate when he speaks of the contraction of intellect and energy; of the obliteration of personalities; of the constant degeneration of life; of the constant exclusion from it of all universally human interests; of its resolving itself into the interests of the counting room and the well-being of the bourgeoisie. Mill proclaims plainly that by following this course England will become China—we will add: *and not England alone.*

"It may be that some crisis may even save it from the Chinese marasmus. But whence will it come, and how?—this I do not know, and even Mill does not know." "Where is that mighty thought, that passionate faith, that fervent hope, which can steel the body, bring the soul to an ecstatic rapture, which feels neither pain nor privations, and with a firm step marches on to the headsman's block and the burning stake? Look around you—what is capable of elevating the nations?"

"*Christianity has grown shallow,* and come to rest in the quiet, rocky harbor of reformation; revolution also has grown shallow, and come to rest

in the quiet, sandy harbor of liberalism. . . . With such a complacent church, with such a tame revolution, southern Europe has begun to settle, to seek its equilibrium."

"Wherever the human ant-hills and bee-hives attained a relative contentment and equilibrium, the forward movement became more and more quiet, until, in the end, came the final calm of China."

In the track of the "Asiatic nations, passed out of history," all Europe, with a calm, imperturbable step is marching on to this final calm of a contented ant-hill, to "the crystallization of bourgeoisie," to Chinafication.

Hertzen agrees with Mill: "If some unexpected upheaval, which shall regenerate human individualism and give it strength to conquer bourgeoisie, does not occur in Europe, then, regardless of its noble antecedents and its Christianity, Europe shall become China."

"Ponder upon it," Hertzen concludes this letter to an unknown Russian,—to all the people of Russia, it would seem,—"ponder upon it, and your hair will stand on end."

Neither Mill nor Hertzen perceived the ultimate cause of this spiritual bourgeoisie. "We are not at all the physicians—we are the pain," warns Hertzen. And, actually, in all these prophecies—

prophecies upon one's own head, not only for Mill, but partly for Hertzen as well—there is no result, no knowledge, but only the cry of an unknown pain, an unknown horror. Hertzen and Mill could not see the cause of bourgeoisie, as a man cannot see his face without a mirror. That with which they suffer and which they fear in others, lodges not only in others, but in themselves,—in the ultimate, insurmountable, and, even to them, invisible limits of their own religious, or, more correctly, their antireligious, consciousness.

The last limit of all contemporary culture in Europe is positivism, or, in the terminology of Hertzen, "scientific realism," as a method not only of the individual scientist, but of all philosophical and even religious thought in general. Having its birth in science and philosophy, positivism has grown out of a scientific and philosophical consciousness into an unconscious religion, which strives to abolish and replace by itself all former religions. Positivism, in this broad sense, is an affirmation of a universe revealed to physical experience, as the only real one, and a denial of a superphysical universe; a denial of the beginning and end of the universe in God and the affirmation of a continuance, without beginning or end, of a universe of phenomena, of a medium of phenomena—

a medium without beginning or end, impermeable to man; a *mediety*, mediocrity—that absolute "conglomerated mediocrity," as perfectly solid as the Great Wall of China, that absolute bourgeoisie, of which Mill and Hertzen speak without understanding the ultimate metaphysical depth of what they are saying.

In Europe positivism is only becoming a religion, in China it has already become one. The spiritual foundation of China—the teachings of Lao-tse and Confucius—is a perfect positivism, a religion without a God, "an earthly religion, without a heaven," as Hertzen expresses himself about European scientific realism. There are no mysteries of any sort, no depths and longings for "other worlds than ours." Everything is simple, everything is on a plane. Insuperable common sense, insuperable positiveness. All that is, is; and there is nothing more, nor need for anything more. This world is all, and there is no other world save this. Heaven is not the beginning and the end, but a continuation, without beginning or end, of the earth. Earth and heaven shall not be one, as Christianity affirms, but *one substance.* The greatest empire on earth is verily the Celestial Empire, the heaven on earth, the Median Kingdom—the kingdom of the eternal mean, of eternal mediocrity, absolute bourgeoisie,

"a kingdom not of God, but of man," as Hertzen, once more, defines the common idealism of positivism. The European worship of descendants—the golden age of the future—corresponds to the Chinese worship of ancestors—the golden age of the past. If not we, then our descendants shall see an earthly paradise, a heaven on earth, asserts the religion of progress. Both in the worship of ancestors and the worship of descendants, the only visage of man is equally sacrificed: personality to impersonality, to a countless race, to the people, to mankind—"the masses of some prolific spawn, compressed out of the myriads of bourgeois shallowness," the coming universal polyp and ant-hill. Denying God, denying an absolute Divine Personality, man inevitably denies his own human personality. Refusing, for the sake of a pottage of lentils of a moderate repletion, his divine hunger and divine primogeniture, man inevitably falls into absolute bourgeoisie.

Chinamen are perfect yellow-faced positivists; Europeans are as yet imperfect white-faced Chinamen. In this respect Americans are nearer perfection than the Europeans. Here furthest South joins furthest East.

That collision of China with Europe, which is beginning, but probably will not end before our eyes,

would have an especially prophetic and threatening meaning for Hertzen and Mill. China has brought to perfection positivistic contemplation, but positivistic action, all the applied technical side of positive knowledge, was lacking to China. Japan, not only the military, but the cultural vanguard of the East, took from the Europeans this technical side of civilization and at once became invincible to them. As long as Europe opposed her best cannons to the Chinese wretched ones, she conquered, and this victory appeared a triumph of culture over barbarism. But when the cannons became equal, cultures became equal as well. It was found that Europe never even had anything save cannons whereby she could show her cultural superiority over the barbarians. Christianity? But "Christianity has grown shallow;" it still has a certain significance, though quite a dubious one, however, for the internal politics of Europe; but when contemporary Christianity, passing beyond the boundary of Europe, finds it necessary to exchange its bills of credit for pure gold, none will give anything for them. And even in Europe the most barefaced are ashamed to talk of Christianity, because of such serious things as war. At one time a fountain-head of great power, Christianity has now become a fountain-head of great impotence, of

suicidal inconsistency, of the contradiction of all culture in southern Europe. Christianity—the old Semitic yeast in the Aryan blood—is verily just that which does not let it settle definitely, interferes with the final "crystallization," the Chinafication of Europe. It would seem that the positivism of the white race is forever spoiled, "wet underneath" with "the metaphysical and theological period." The positivism of the yellow race in general and of the Japanese in particular—this newly-laid little egg of the little Mongolian hen by the little white Aryan rooster—is unspoiled by anything: as it has been through two or three millennia, so has it remained, so shall it remain forever. European positivism is still too intellectual—superficial, that is: of the skin, so to say; the yellow people are positivists to the marrow of their bones. And the cultural heritage of the ages—Chinese metaphysics and theology—do not weaken but strengthen this natural physiological gift.

He who is true to his physiology is consistent; he who is consistent is strong; and he who is strong conquers. Japan conquered Russia. China will conquer Europe, unless a great spiritual change be achieved within it, which shall overturn the last metaphysical foundations of her culture, and allow it to oppose to the cannons of the positivistic East

not alone the cannons of the positivistic South, but something more real, more substantial.

That is where the chief "yellow peril" is—not without, but within; not in that China is going into Europe, but in that Europe is going into China. Our faces are still white; but already under the white skin flows not the former rich, crimson Aryan blood, but a "yellow" blood, thinner and thinner, resembling Mongolian ichor; the slit of our eyes is straight, but the outlook is beginning to slant and narrow. And the direct white light of the European day is turning into the oblique "yellow" light of the Chinese setting sun, or the Japanese rising sun. At the present time the Japanese seem to be the dressed-up apes of the Europeans; who knows but that, in time, Europeans and even Americans may seem the dressed-up apes of the Japanese and Chinese, incorrigible idealists, romanticists of the old world, who only pretend to be positivists, masters of the new world. It may be that the war of the yellow race with the white was only a misunderstanding: kin did not recognize kin. When they shall recognize each other, however, war shall end with peace, and then there shall be "a peace of all the world," the final calm and quietude of heaven, the Celestial Empire, the Median Kingdom over all the world, from East to South, the final

"crystallization, the bee-hive and ant-hill of all mankind, the solid "compressed spawn" of bourgeoisie encrusting the earthly sphere,—and not even bourgeoisie, but the *canaille*, because bourgeoisie having reached its limits and come into power is the *canaille*.

"Ponder upon it," we may conclude these reflections, as Hertzen concluded them formerly, "ponder upon it, and your hair will stand on end."

Hertzen had two hopes for the salvation of Europe from China.

The first—the weaker one—for a social overturn. Hertzen stated the dilemma thus:

"If the people will be broken, a new China is inevitable. But if the people break, a *social overturn* is inevitable."

Query: Having broken down the social oppression, with what, and in the name of what, will the people break down as well the inner spiritual beginning of bourgeois culture? With what new faith, what source of new nobility? With what volcanic explosion of human individuality against the impersonal ant-hill?

Hertzen himself asserts:

"Behind the majority now in power (*i. e.*, behind the majority of the capitalistic bourgeoisie), stands a *still greater* majority of candidates for it (*i. e.*, the

proletariat), for whom the manners, conceptions, and the ways of living of the bourgeoisie are the only goal of all their endeavors; there are enough of them for ten changes. A world without land, the world of the city proletariat, has no other way of salvation, *and will be all permeated with bourgeoisie,* which in our eyes has retrograded, but in the eyes of the rustic population and proletarians represents education and development."

But if the people "will be all permeated with bourgeoisie," then, it may be asked, where will it arrive? Will it be out of the present, imperfect bourgeoisie into a future and perfect one; out of the unhappy, capitalistic ant-hill into a happy, socialistic one; out of the dark, iron age of Europe into the "yellow," golden age and eternity of China? The hungry proletariat and the satiated bourgeois have different economical interests, but their metaphysics and religion are the same—the metaphysics of a sober common sense, a religion of a sober bourgeois repletion. The war of the fourth estate with the third, economically real, is just as unreal metaphysically and religiously as the war of the yellow race with the white; both there and here is might against might, and not God against God. In both cases there is one and the

same misunderstanding: behind an external, temporary war there is an internal, perpetual peace.

And so, to the question with what the people will conquer bourgeoisie, Hertzen has no answer of any sort. True, he could have borrowed the answer of his friend, the anarchist Bakunin; he could have gone over from socialism to anarchism. Socialism desires to replace one social order with another, the rule of the minority with the rule of the majority; anarchism denies every social order, every external rule, in the name of absolute freedom, absolute individuality—this beginning of all beginnings and end of all ends. Bourgeoisie, invincible to socialism, *seems* vincible to anarchism —although only till a certain time, until new, still more extreme inferences, which, however, neither Hertzen nor Bakunin foresaw. The strength and weakness of socialism, as a religion, is in that it predetermines a future social creative power and just through this involuntarily includes within itself the spirit of the eternal Mean, of bourgeoisie, the inevitable metaphysical consequence of positivism as a religion, on which socialism itself is builded. The strength and weakness of anarchism is in that it does not predetermine any social creative power, does not bind itself before the past with any respon-

sibility for the future, and from the historical shoal of bourgeoisie sails out upon the open sea of unplumbed historical depths, where it is on the brink either of a total wreck, or the discovery of a new heaven and a new earth. "We must destroy, destroy only, without thinking of creating,—it is not our business to create," preaches Bakunin. But here conscious positivism already ceases, and hidden, unconscious mysticism commences—atheistic, antitheistic, if you will, but mysticism still. When Bakunin in *Dieu et l'etat* supposes that his "antitheologism"—more correctly, *antitheism,*—is a basis for anarchy, he touches upon limits of negation far too dangerous, where minus by minus produces an unexpected plus, an accidental affirmation of some converse, unconscious religion. "The absolutely free man" of Bakunin too greatly resembles a fantastic "superman," a non-man, to be received with peace at heart by Hertzen, who fears mysticism more than anything else, even more than bourgeoisie itself, not realizing that this superstitious fear of mysticism already has something of the mystical in it. Be that as it may, Hertzen, a socialist of the true faith, shrank back from Bakunin the anarchist, who had fallen into heresy.

Towards the end of his life Hertzen lost, or almost lost, hope in the social overturn in Europe;

apparently, however, because he had ceased to believe not so much in its possibility as in its salutariness.

Then it was that the last light began to glimmer in the advancing gloom, the last hope of the oncoming despair,—a hope in Russia, in the Russian rural commune, which, it would seem, was to save Europe.

II

IF Hertzen was the Mephistopheles of Bakunin in the unveiling of the unconscious mysticism of the anarchistic "underworld," then Bakunin, in his turn, was the Mephistopheles of Hertzen in the unveiling of just as unconscious a mysticism about the Russian commune as a savior of Europe.

"You are ready to forgive everything," wrote Bakunin to Ogarev and Hertzen from Ischia in 1866, "ready, if you like, to support everything, if not directly then indirectly, if only your mystical holy of holies remain inviolable, the commune of Great Russia, from which mystically—do not grow angry at an offensive but true word—you expect the salvation not only of the people of Great Russia, but also of all the Slavic lands, of Europe, of the world. And, by the way, tell me why you have not deigned to answer seriously and plainly to the serious reproach made to you: you have caught in the Russian peasant hut, which, with its landed rights, has itself caught, and so stands for ages, in

a Chinese immobility. Why has this commune, from which you expect such wonders in the future, produced nothing from itself during all of ten centuries, except the most abominable serfdom? An abominable corruption and the patriarchal customs, with their complete lack of rights, a lack of rights of the individual before the community, and the all-oppressive burden of this community, killing every possibility of individual initiative; the absence not only of juridicial rights, but of common justice in the decisions of this very community and the cruel unceremoniousness of its attitude toward every poor or weak member; its systematic oppression of those members who show pretensions to the least independence, and the readiness to sell every right and every truth for a bucket of whisky —here, in the entirety of its real character, is the peasant commune of Great Russia."

What answer could the orthodox Hertzen have made to this anathema of Bakunin, the heretic? Nothing positive, but only mystical, rather: *credo, quia absurdum,*—just as, however, Bakunin could not answer anything to Hertzen in the matter of the "antitheological," but still too theological, foundation of anarchism, this *absolute* liberation of *absolute* individuality, incomprehensible from the positive—*relative,* that is,—point of view. Therein is

the whole crux of the matter: both Hertzen and Bakunin had bordering deductions, having reached which, they, looking each other in the eye, should have burst into laughter, like augurs. But they both desired to be not the augurs, the priests, of the old gods, but to be the prophets of the new, and therefore avoided looking into each other's eyes. Each one, in order not to laugh at himself, laughed at his opponent; but during this mutual laughter both were grievously sad at heart.

Why, indeed, must the common ownership of the ant-hill deliver the ants from the lot of ants? And wherein is savage serfdom better than cultured beastliness?

When Hertzen ran away from Russia into Europe, he fell out of one bondage into another,—from the material into the spiritual. And when he wanted to run away from Europe back into Russia, he fell out of the European movement toward a new China—into the old "Chinese immobility" of Russia. In both cases, out of the frying pan into the fire. Which of the two Chinas is better—the old or the new? "Both are worse," as the children answer. Hertzen knew this, yet did not want to know it. And when he ran from one China into another, he was running away from himself, beating about in the last horror of the last realization,

that there was no longer anything to believe in, neither in Europe nor in Russia. "Pray, what does all history lead to, after this?" he asks himself in one of his hopeless Hamletian monologues.

"But then, what does everything in this world lead to? As for history, I do not make it, and therefore do not answer for it."

But this is the answer of Cain. Why, this is the Byronian *Darkness*, the last darkness, the limit of despair of which the soul of man is capable. For if all history is nonsense, there was nothing to make a fuss about—to fight with bourgeoisie, despotism, reaction: come what may, what does it matter?—all the world is "the devil's vaudeville," and, addressing all the world, there only remains to cry out, as in 1849, after the revolution, Hertzen cries out, addressing old Europe:

"Long live destruction and chaos! Long live death!

Or, what is still worse: long live bourgeoisie!"

"Christianity has grown shallow," asserts Hertzen. If it has grown shallow, it means that it was deep at one time. Why, then, does he not sound this depth of Christianity? Is it not because the positivistic plummet, adapted to the shoal of Christianity, does not reach to the bottom in deep places?

Together with Christianity—adds Hertzen—

"revolution has grown shallow as well." If they have both grown shallow in common, does it not mean that their shoal is in common, and their depth also? The shoal—positivistic—is the absolute bourgeoisie of man without God; the depth—religious—the absolute nobility of man in God. Hertzen himself acknowledges the connection of revolutionary ideas with religious ones; understands that the Declaration and Bill of Rights could not have appeared before, and without, Christianity.

"Revolution," he says, "just as reformation, stands in a churchyard. Voltaire, blessing Franklin's nephew, 'in the name of God and Liberty,' is as much of a theologian as Saint Basil the Great or Gregory of Nazianzin, only in a different sense. The cold lunar reflection of Catholicism (*i. e.*, one of the greatest attempts of universal Christianity) is permeated with all the destinies of revolution. The last word of Catholicism is spoken by reformation and revolution; they have exposed its mystery; the mystic redemption is solved by political liberation. The symbol of the faith of the Nicene Council expressed itself in the acknowledgment of the rights of every man—the symbol of the last universal council, *i. e.*, the Convention of 1792. The morality of Matthew the Evangelist is the very same which the deist Jean Jacques Rousseau preaches.

Faith, hope, and charity—at the entrance; liberty, fraternity, and equality—at the exit."

If that be so, then it would seem that, before pronouncing the death sentence of European culture and running from it to Russian barbarism, in the despair of a final unbelief, one ought to think if these two shoaled beginnings of universal culture —religion and sociality—could not somehow be moved from their common positivistic shoal into their common religious depths. Why, then, does not Hertzen think of it? For still the same reason, it would seem: he fears religious depths still more than positivistic shoals; he seems to see in the depth of any mysticism the ferocious beast of reaction, in its way a beast of the Apocalypse, coming out of its abyss.

The reckless Bakunin has thought, and made answer, for the cautious Hertzen; Bakunin, who has resolved the dilemma of Hertzen into the theological, or "anti-theological," dilemma: *"Dieu est, donc l'homme est esclave. L'homme est libre, donc il n'y a point de Dieu.—Je defie qui que ce soit de sortir de ce cercle et maintenant choisissons."*

"God is, therefore man is a slave. Man is free, therefore there is no God. I maintain that no one

can escape out of this circle—and now let us choose."

"The religion of humanity," concludes Bakunin, "must be founded on the ruins of the religion of Divinity."

Voltaire asserted: if there is no God, He must be invented. Bakunin asserts the very opposite: if there is a God, He must be abolished. This reminds one of the Devil's words to Ivan Karamazov:

"The idea of a God must be destroyed in humanity—we must start work from that. Once humanity denies God, everything new will come."

In 1869, at the Congress of the League for Peace and Liberty at Berne, Bakunin proposed to adopt into the basis of the socialistic program a denial of all religions and the avowal that "the existence of a God is inconsistent with the happiness, dignity, reason, morality and liberty of men."

When the majority rejected this resolution, Bakunin with certain members of the minority formed a new Alliance, Alliance Socialiste, the first paragraph of whose code proclaimed: "The Alliance declares itself Godless (*athée*)."

This zealous "antitheologism" is already not only the denial of religion, but the *religion of denial* as well, some new religion without a God,

full of a jealousy no less fanatical than the old religions with a God. Turgeniev, hearing of Bakunin's prank at Berne, was astonished. "What has happened to him!" Turgeniev asked of all. "Why, he was always a believer, he even scolded Hertzen for his atheism. Just what, then, has happened to him?"

It is plain why it is necessary for the Devil to destroy in men the idea of a God: that is why he is a Devil, in order to hate God. But A. M. Bakunin, regardless of all his antitheological zeal, is not a devil, but a simple man, and a religious one to boot. What, then, has happened to him indeed? Why has he suddenly come to hate the name of God, and, like one possessed, begun to blaspheme?

"If there is a God, man is a slave," asserted Bakunin. Why? Because "liberty is a denial of all authority, and God is authority." This proposition Bakunin considers an axiom. And truly, this would be an axiom, if there were no Christ. Christ has revealed to men that God is not authority, but love; not an external power of authority, but an inner power of love. He who loves does not desire slavery for the one beloved. Between him who loves and him who is loved there is no other power save love; but the power of love is no longer power, but freedom.

Perfect love is perfect freedom. God is perfect love, and, consequently, perfect freedom. When the Son says to the Father: "Not my will, but thine, be done," it is not the submission of bondage, but the freedom of love. The Son does not wish to infringe upon the will of the Father not because he cannot, but he cannot because he does not wish to.

To the dilemma of Bakunin, affirming a God of hatred and bondage, *i. e.*, in reality not a God, but a Devil, can be opposed another dilemma, affirming the true God, a God of love and freedom:

"God is, therefore man is free; man is a slave, therefore there is no God. I maintain that no one can escape out of this circle—and now let us choose."

All those who have believed in God have always been slaves, Hertzen would have agreed with Bakunin. But the idea of God, the idea of a higher metaphysical order, cannot be subordinated to the experience of a lower historical order. And, after all, have all those who have believed in God been slaves? What of Jacob, who wrestled with God; what of Job, who complained against God; what of the prophets of Israel, what of the Christian martyrs?

Bakunin and Hertzen, desiring to strive against

the metaphysical idea of God, in reality strive against historical phantoms, distorted with the refractions of this idea in the mists of political low places; they strive not against the name of God, but with those blasphemies with which "the prince of this earth," an eternal politician, endeavors to screen from men that name which to him, the devil, is the holiest and most fearful of all the names of God: *Freedom.*

Of course, the greatest crime in history, as if of a second crucifixion no longer of the God-man, but of God-mankind, consists in this: that on the cross, the sign of divine freedom, human freedom has been crucified. But can it be possible that Bakunin and Hertzen would be bold enough to assert that the Crucified Himself participated in this crime, that Christ desired bondage for men? Can it be possible that Bakunin and Hertzen have never thought of the meaning of Christ's answer to the Devil, when he offers Him power over all the kingdoms of this earth: "For it hath been delivered unto me," said the Devil, "and to whomsoever I will I give it." If He, Who said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth," renounced all power of ruling as belonging to the Devil, does it not mean that, between the true, inner power of love, the freedom of Christ, and the out-

ward, false power, bondage, there is the same difference as between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Devil? Can it be possible that Bakunin and Hertzen have never thought of the meaning of this saying of Christ also: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." If to them this is a word that has not been kept, it is perhaps because they are indeed words not understood, not fully assimilated: "Ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth." And into the final truth of love, which shall make men free.

In the first kingdom of the Father, the Old Testament, was revealed the power of God, as truth; in the second kingdom of the Son, the New Testament, the truth reveals itself as love; in the third, and last, kingdom of the Spirit, the Coming Testament, love will be revealed as freedom. And in this last kingdom will be pronounced and heard the last name of the Coming Lord, a name as yet unpronounced and unheard of any: The Liberator.

But here we already cast off not only from *this* shore, on which stands European culture, with its bourgeoisie of the past and the present, but from the *other* shore as well, on which Hertzen stands before the bourgeoisie of the future; we float out

into the open ocean, in which all shores disappear; into the ocean of the Coming Christianity, as one of the three revelations of the unified Revelation of the Trinity.

The tragedy of Hertzen is in this halving: with his consciousness he rejected God,—unconsciously, he sought Him. Just as in the Bakunian dilemma, from the accepted premise: man is free,—through his consciousness he made the deduction: therefore there is no God; unconsciously, he felt the incontrovertibility of the converse dilemma: if there is no God, there is also no freedom. But to say: there is no freedom, was for Hertzen tantamount to saying: there is no meaning in life, there is nothing to live for, there is nothing to die for. And, in fact, he lived for, and died for the sake of, that in which he already well-nigh did not believe.

This is not the first prophet and martyr of a new, but the last warrior, the dying gladiator of the old world, of old Rome.

> ". . . The buzz of eager nations ran
> In . . . loud-roared applause. . . .
> I see before me the gladiator lie;
> He leans upon his hand; his manly brow
> Consents to death, but conquers agony. . . ."

The beast with which this gladiator fights is the bourgeoisie of the future. In the manner of his

ancestors, the northern barbarians, he has come out to the combat naked, without shield or weapon. And the other beast, "the thousand-headed hydra, the multitudinous spawn," of the bourgeoisie of the past and the present, watches the young Scythian from the steps of the ancient amphitheater.

"And through his side, the last drops, ebbing slow,
From the red gash, fall heavy one by one. . . .
And now
The arena swims around him,—he is gone. . . .
He heeded not—
His eyes were with his heart, and that was far away."

Hertzen's vision before death is of Russia as "a land of free existence" and of the Russian peasant commune as the salvation of the world. He took his old love for a new faith, but, it would seem, at the last minute understood that even this last faith was a deception. If faith deceived him, however, love did not; in his love for Russia there was some true foresight: not the peasant commune, but a Christian sociality may, indeed, be the new faith which the young barbarians will bring to old Rome.

But in the meantime, the dying man is still dying, —without any faith:

"Forgive, O Rome corrupt! Forgive, O native land!"

In the fate of Hertzen, the greatest Russian intel-

ligent, is forecast a question on which depends the fate of the whole Russian intelligentzia: will it comprehend that only in the coming Christianity consists the power capable of conquering bourgeoisie and the coming rabble? If it will comprehend, then it shall be the first confessor and martyr of a new world; but if not, then, like Hertzen, it shall be only the last warrior of the old world, the dying gladiator.

III

"*WHEN they are saying Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.*" This prophecy has never seemed nearer its fulfillment than in our day.

At the same time that the South, in the person of Russia, is concluding a peace with the East, and all the nations are repeating: peace, peace,—a war-like meeting takes place in Swinemünde. Two of the most enlightened nations came together only to show their mailed fists to each other. Just as if two beasts of prey had stolen up to each other, put their muzzles together, and, snarling and baring their teeth, sniffed each other, had bristled up, all ready for a lunge to tear each other, and, backing away, had silently gone their ways.

This is not an actuality, but an idealized sign of modern European culture. External policies are only a cynical exposure of the internal. "By their fruits shall ye know them." The fruit of internal, spiritual bourgeoisie is external, international brutality,—militarism, chauvinism.

The ancient she-wolf of Rome, too, had sharp teeth, and a blood-thirsty rapacity in politics. But when it came to certain ideas held in common —*Pax romana*, the idea of a universal peace, and the Eternal City, the incarnation of eternal Reason, —Rome paused, and reverently lowered before these unalterable sanctities its fasces, the insignia of its legions with the all-conquering eagles. And in the darkest night of mediæval barbarism, in the midst of feudal intestine dissension, the nations ceased war and laid down their arms at the beck of a meek old man, a Roman pontiff who brought to their minds the will of Christ: "There shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd."

Now there is neither the empire of Rome, nor a Roman church. There is no idea held in common, no common sanctity. Over the "Christian" kingdoms—these old gothic shops—still rears here and there the half-rotted wooden cross of Protestantism, or the corroded brazen cross of Catholicism; but no longer does any one pay the least attention to them. The religion of modern Europe is not Christianity, but bourgeoisie. From the prudence of well-fed bourgeoisie to an insane, famishing brutality is only one step. Not only is man a wolf to man, but nation to nation as well. Only a mutual fear restrains them from a mutual devouring;

the rein is entirely too weak for the infuriated beasts. If not to-day, then to-morrow they shall spring upon each other, and there shall begin a slaughter the like of which has never been before.

A French writer, Villiers de L'isle-Adam, has a fantastic story of two neighboring towns, peopled with good, honest burghers and shop-keepers; quarreling over some trifle town goes to war against town, and, despite their cowardice—or in consequence of their cowardice,—the shop-keepers exterminate the shop-keepers so, that of the whole prosperous bourgeoisie culture only scraps and ends are left.

The international politics of modern Europe remind one of the politics of these cowardly and ferocious shop-keepers.

When one looks upon the faces of those in whose hands lies the fate of Europe, one recalls the prophecies of Mill and Hertzen about the inevitable victory of a spiritual China. Before there have been monsters in history—Tamerlanes, Attilas, Borgias. Now there are no monsters—just men, like all men. Instead of a scepter,—a yardstick; instead of a Bible,—a ledger; instead of an altar,—a counter. What self-satisfied vulgarity and insipidity in the expression of the faces! One gazes, and wonders with a great wonder, as the

Apocalypse has it: [1] Whence have sprung these crowned lackeys, these triumphant beasts?

Yes, bourgeoisie has made fearful successes in Europe since the time of Hertzen and Mill.

All the nobility of culture, having withdrawn from the province of public affairs, has concentrated itself in isolated personalities, in such great eremites as Nietzsche, Ibsen, Flaubert, and—still the most youthful of the young—the aged Goethe. In the midst of the even plain of bourgeoisie, these bottomless artesian wells of humanity witness that under the parched earth living waters are hidden still. But a geological upheaval, an earthquake, is necessary that the subterranean waters may burst forth and flood the plain, carry away the ant-hills, overturn the old shops of bourgeois Europe. But meanwhile there is a dead drought.

And, just as soon as they come out of the circle of individual culture, and touch upon sociality, even these great anchorites of European genius lose their nobility, become trivial, shallow, exhausted, like rivers of the plains come upon sands.

When Goethe speaks of the French Revolution,

[1] "I wondered with great admiration." Revelation, XVII, 6. The archaic meaning of admiration, as defined by Webster, is wonder, astonishment. TRANS.

he suddenly droops down to the earth; as if through some evil enchantment the giant flattens down, shrivels into a dwarf; from a Hellenic demi-god he becomes a German burgher, and—may the shade of the Olympian forgive me!—a German philister, "Herr von-Goethe," a privy councilor to a duke of Weimar and an honest son of an honest shop-keeper of Frankfort. When Flaubert asserts: *la politique est faite pour la canaille,*—one recalls with sadness the *salon* of the Princess Mathilda and other gilt pig-sties of the Second Empire, where this Simeon the Stylite of æsthetics cast pearls before the swine, preaching his new oligarchy of "the mandarins of learning." When Nietzsche makes eyes not merely at Bismarck, but the Russian autocrat as well, as the greatest manifestation of "the Will to Might," *Wille zur Macht,* in the midst of modern European impotence,—then, on the pale brow of "the crucified Dionysos" also appears the same black spot of bourgeois contamination. The noblest, because the frankest, of all seems Ibsen, who expressed his attitude toward sociality in a few words: *An Enemy of the People.*

But the friends of the people, such genial leaders of democracy as Lasalle, Engels, Marx, while preaching socialism not only do not warn prac-

tically, but even theoretically do not foresee that danger of "a new China," "a spiritual bourgeoisie," which Hertzen and Mill feared so greatly.

And in answer to the socialists resounds the fearful song of the new troglodytes:

"Vive le son, vive le son
De l'explosion!"

Anarchism is the last spasm, no longer of social, but of individual revolt against the unbearable weight of state bourgeoisie.

At one time such singers of solitary despair as Leopardi and Byron plumbed all the depth of the world's sorrow, bound up with this downfall of European sociality. Now there is no one whose eye could plumb this depth: it has proven bottomless. In silence the seeing pass around it; the blind fall into it silently.

But here our gaze, in a last despair or with a final hope, even as the gaze of Hertzen, "the dying gladiator," involuntarily turns from one of "our two native lands," from Europe to Russia—from the dark South to the East, darker still though already ensanguined either with the dawn or a conflagration. For Hertzen this "light of the East" was a resurrection of "the peasant commune"; for us it is a resurrection of Christian sociality. And

here again arises at the beginning of the twentieth century the question put in the middle of the nineteenth: Will Russia conquer bourgeoisie, the unconquered of Europe?

IV

"THE Russian intelligentzia is the best in the world," declared Gorky recently.

I will not say this; not because I do not desire it, or think so, but because it is embarassing to praise one's self. For both Gorky and I are Russian intelligents. And consequently it is not for us to assert that the Russian intelligent is the very best of all possible intelligents in the best of all possible worlds. Such an optimism is dangerous, especially in these times in Russia, when every frog is praising its own bog. No, it is better according to the other adage: Whom I love, I chastise. It is more painful, but more wholesome. And so, I do not undertake to decide whether the Russian intelligentzia is a miracle or a monster; I only know that it is, indeed, a thing unique in modern European culture.

Bourgeoisie has seized all sociality in Europe; individual personalities flee from it into the nobility of higher culture. In Russia it is just the opposite: individual personalities are not guarded from

bourgeoisie by the low level of our culture; but then our sociality is noble through and through.

"Indeed, there is something insane in our life: but there is nothing vulgar, *nothing bourgeois.*"

If to this be added: not in our personal, but our public life,—then these words of Hertzen, spoken half a century ago, remain true to the present day.

Russian sociality is noble through and through because it is tragic through and through. The substance of tragedy is opposed to the substance of the idyll. The source of all bourgeoisie is an idyllic welfare, even though in bad taste; "a golden dream," even though of Chinese gilt tinsel. Tragedy, the veritable iron of the crucifying nails, is the source of all nobility, that ruby-red blood which maketh all those who receive its sacrament of "the blood royal." The existence of the Russian intelligentzia is a continual unhappiness, a continual tragedy.

It would seem that there is in the world no situation more helpless than that in which the Russian intelligentzia has found itself—a position between two pressures: a pressure from above, of the autocratic order; and a pressure from below, of the dark element of the people, not so much hating as not understanding—but at times failure to understand is worse than any hatred. Between these two

fearful pressures Russian sociality is grinding, like the clean wheat of God,—if God wills, it will be ground and there shall be meal, the meal for that bread with which, at last, the great hunger of the people shall be appeased; but in the meanwhile the lot of the Russian intelligent is still the lot of the grain of wheat—to be crushed, ground,—a tragic lot. There is no longer any thought of bourgeoisie—it is not a question of getting off well, but of getting out alive!

Look closely: what an amorphous state of society, indeed; what strange personages!

Here is a young man, "poorly dressed, with delicate features," the murderer of a usurious old woman, an imitator of Napoleon, a student who has not completed his education,—Rodion Raskolnikov. Here is a medical student who disembowels with his scalpel and scepsis live frogs and dead philosophers, and preaches *Stoff und Kraft* with the same cut-throat bravado as the merry men of Stenka Razin upon a time used to cry *Sarin na kichku!* [2]—the nihilist Bazarov. Here is a nobleman-philosopher, grown common and tilling the soil—Nikolai Levin. Here is a novice, as modest

[2] *All hands to the prow!*—probably as a preliminary to walking the plank; a command once in use by Volga robbers upon capturing a ship. TRANS.

as a girl—"a red-cheeked realist," "a precocious philanthropist,"—Alesha Karamazov. And his brother Ivan—the precocious misanthrope; Ivan, —"the inner conscience." And, finally, the most unusual of them all, "the man from the underworld," with lips twisted as if from a perpetual convulsion of maliciousness, with eyes full of a new love, as yet unknown to the world—the love of a St. John; with the heavy glance of an epileptic; an ex-convict and prisoner at the Fortress of St. Peter; a future unnatural hybrid of the reactionary with the terrorist—the half-possessed, half-sainted, Fedor Michailovitch Dostoievsky.

Behind them are other, nameless ones,—faces of a still more severe, classical nobility, as if hewn out of marble: the images of new Harmodiuses and Aristogitons, Saint Justs and Camille Desmoulins, the wroth cherubim of national tempests. And there are maidens, like chaste vestals, like new Judiths, going into the camp of Holofernes, with prayer at heart and sword in hand.

But in the very darkest depth, midst the thunder and lightnings of our Sinai, on the fourteenth of December, are the already well-nigh inhuman visages of the first prophets and the forefathers of Russian liberty,—carvings no longer of marble

but of granite. Is it not the same granite whose mass the Bronze Horseman [3] tramples?

All these are whatever you will, but not bourgeois. If Flaubert had dared assert in their presence: *la politique est faite pour la canaille,* he would sooner have become one of the rabble himself than have made them into a rabble. For them politics are a passion, an intoxication, "a consuming fire," in which the will, like steel, becomes white-hot. These are the heroes famed in no national legends, martyrs recorded in no church calendars,—but veritable heroes, veritable martyrs still.

> "From the exulting and idly chattering,
> Encrimsoning their hands with gore,
> Lead me away to the camp of those perishing
> For the great work of love they adore."

When "the great work of love" is consummated, when the movement for liberation which they have begun and are carrying on is ended,—only then shall Russia understand the worth of these men and what they have done.

What, then, is this unprecedented society, the only one of its kind in the world,—is it an order,

[3] A famous statue in St. Petersburg, showing Peter the Great on a rearing horse. TRANS.

or a caste, or a faith, or a conspiracy? This is neither a caste, nor a faith, nor a conspiracy; it is all of them in one—it is the Russian intelligentzia.

Whence has it appeared? Who created it? The same one who created, or rather gave birth to, all of the new Russia: Peter the Great.

I have already spoken once, and repeat anew and insist: the first Russian intelligent was Peter. He has imprinted, struck off, as on the bronze of a coin, his image on the blood and body of the Russian intelligentzia. The sole legitimate heirs, the children of Peter, are we, all Russian intelligents. He is in us; we are in him. He who loves Peter, loves us; he who hates him, hates us as well.

What is Peter? A miracle or a monster? Again, I do not undertake to decide. He is too dear to me, too much a part of myself, for me to judge of him impartially. I only know—there will be no other Peter; Russia has but one of him; and she has but one Russian intelligentzia, she will have no other. And while Peter is alive in Russia, the great Russian intelligentzia is alive as well.

Every day we perish. We have many enemies, few friends. Great is the danger threatening us, but great also is our hope: Peter is with us.

V

AMID all the sad and fearful phenomena which Russian society has to live through of late,—the saddest and most fearful is that savage baiting of the Russian intelligentzia, which, as yet, is fortunately taking place only in the dark and obscure underground cellars of the Russian press.

Is the Russian intelligentzia necessary to Russia? The question is so absurd, that it seems, at times, not worth while answering. Who are those who ask save the intelligents themselves? Doubting the Russian intelligentzia's right to existence, they doubt their own right to existence,—however, perhaps they do well, because the degree of their own "intelligence" is too insignificant. Verily, there is something suicidal in this baiting, bordering on violent mania, for which are necessary not the deductions of reason, but a strait-jacket. There are times, however, when there is nothing left for reason itself save to put on this strait-jacket against the violence of the insane.

Amid the inarticulate lamentations and revilements can be made out only one accusation having some faint resemblance of reasoning,—the accusation of "groundlessness," of a detachment from the famous "three estates," the three leviathans of national life.

Here, if you will, is not only "groundlessness," we are ready to agree,—here is an abyss, the same "abyss" over which the Bronze Horseman has "upreared" Russia—all of Russia, and not merely the Russian intelligentzia. Let her accusers, then, say directly: Peter is not a Russian. But in such a case we "groundless" intelligents will prefer to remain with Peter, and with Pushkin, who loved Peter as if he were the nearest of kin, rather than remain with those to whom Peter and Pushkin are strangers.

"The Russian is fearfully free in spirit,' says Dostoievsky, pointing to Peter. In just this fearful freedom of spirit, in this ability to break away suddenly from the earth, from existence and history, to burn all its ships, to break up all its past in the name of an unknown future,—in just this spontaneous *groundlessness* consists one of the deepest particularities of the Russian spirit. It is very difficult to move us; but once we have moved, we reach the extreme in everything, in good and evil,

in truth and falsehood, in wisdom and insanity. "All we Russians love to wander along brinks and precipices," complained even in the seventeenth century our first Slavophile, Knijanin. A particularity very dangerous, perhaps, but what is to be done? To be one's own self is not always devoid of danger. To deny one's self is to become not merely "groundless," but impersonal, incapable. This resembles a paradox, but at times it seems as if our "groundlings," independents, and nationalists are far less Russian than our nihilists and deniers, our intellectual "runners" and "no-sayers." Self-denial, self-consuming, are inconceivable, impossible anywhere save Russia. Between the archpresbyter Avvacuum, ready to be burned and to burn others for the old faith, and the anarchist Bakunin, proposing, during the revolution of Dresden, to put out on the walls of the besieged town the Sistine Madonna as a protection against the Prussian bombs,—the Prussians, d'ye see, being educated people, will not dare to shoot at Raphael, —between these two Russian extremes there is far more in common than would appear at first sight.

Pushkin compared Peter with Robespierre and in Peter's reorganization saw "a revolution from above," "a white terror." Indeed, Peter is not only the first Russian intelligent, but the first Rus-

sian nihilist as well. When the "archdeacon of the all-fools' cathedral" scoffs at the greatest national sanctities, it is a nihilism far more daring and dangerous than the nihilism of Pisarev when he scatters Pushkin right and left.

The Russian peasant Dukhobortzi, upon finding themselves somewheres at the world's end—in Canada—set their cattle free and harnessed themselves to the plows, out of mercy for the animals,—is this not "groundlessness"? And, at the same time, are these not Russian people? "Dukhoborchestvo,"—an excessive spirituality, distractedness; a rationalism, reaching to the limits of its deductions, to the edge of the "abyss,"—revealing itself in the sectarianism of our common people, reveals itself in our intelligentzia as well. The nihilist Bazarov says, "When I die, a burdock will grow." Nil Sorsky orders in his will not to bury him, but to throw him somewhere in a field, like a "dead hound": in both cases, regardless of the difference in the conclusions, there is the very same unconscious metaphysics—the ascetic contempt of the spirit for the flesh. The intelligents' "groundlessness"—a deflected idealism—is one of the final, but very vital, off-shoots of a national asceticism.

The misfortune of the Russian intelligentzia is not in that it is not sufficiently, but that it is *exceed-*

ingly Russian, Russian only. When Dostoievsky sought the "all-man," the universal man, in the depths of the Russian, he felt and wanted to forestall this danger.

"Groundlessness" is a trait genuinely Russian, but, be it understood, as yet not of all Russia, of course. It is only one of the contradictory extremes which so amazingly dwell together in Russia. Side by side with the intelligents and the national Dukhobor-rationalists, are the intelligent and national mystics of the Khlisty sect.

Side by side with the excessively sober are the excessively intoxicated. Beside the Russia, extending into the distance like a somewhat drear and gray plain, the everyday Russia of Pisarev and Chernishevsky:

> "These poor settlements,
> This scanty nature,"

there is a Russia of the heights and of the underground, extending up to the summit and down into the depths, a mysterious, starry, nocturnal Russia of Dostoievsky and Lermontov:

> "Night is still; and all the desert hearkens
> Unto God; and star to star converses. . . ."

Which of these two Russias is authentic? Both are equally authentic.

Their separation has at present reached its final limits. *How they are to be united?*—That is the great question of the future.

VI

THE second accusation, bound up with the first one of "groundlessness," is the "Godlessness" of the Russian intelligentzia.

It is scarcely a simple coincidence that this accusation of Godlessness proceeds almost always from people of whom it has been said: "These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Of the Russian intelligentzia one wants to say at times: "With their lips they do not honor me, but their hearts are not far from me."

Faith and a consciousness of faith are not one and the same. Not all those who intend to believe, believe; and not all those who intend not to believe, do not believe. The Russian intelligentzia as yet has no religious consciousness, has not been confessed, but there is already a great and constantly growing thirst for religion. "Blessed *are* they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

There exist many opposite ways to God, not only

positive but also negative. The God-wrestling of Jacob, the murmuring of Job, the unbelief of Thomas,—all these are authentic ways to God.

Let the Russian intelligents be "publicans and sinners"—the last of the last. "Publicans and sinners go into the kingdom of God before" those pharisees and scribes who "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. . . . 'The last shall be first.' Neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

At times it seems that this very atheism of the Russian intelligenzia is some peculiar, mystical atheism. Here it has the same denial of religion as Bakunin's, passing into a religion of denial; the same tragic halving of mind and heart, like Hertzen's: the mind rejects, the heart seeks, God.

A great void is necessary for a great filling. Is not the "Godlessness" of the Russian intelligentzia the void of a deep vessel which awaits filling?

"And there were set there six waterpots of stone . . . .

"Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

"And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*.

"When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, . . . the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

"And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worst: thou hast kept the good wine until now."

Our hope is in that our Cana of Galilee is before us: our waterpots yet stand empty; we are drinking the worse wine, but Architriclion has kept the good until now.

Dostoievsky, recalling in some way after thirty years one of his conversations with Belinsky, exclaims with as much indignation as if the conversation had taken place only yesterday: "This man reviled Christ in my presence!"

And he makes a frantic inference:

"Belinsky is the most stupid and most fetid phenomenon of Russian life." There is some dreadful misunderstanding here. That Belinsky could revile Christ is a dreadful thing. But it is perhaps still more dreadful that, on the basis of these revilings, Dostoievsky after thirty years could pronounce such a sentence over Belinsky, not having understood that even if this man—consumed like a candle before *Some One*, Whom he did not know after all, nor could call by name,—was not with

Christ, Christ was with him. "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him." When Belinsky uprose against Gogol, because in his *Correspondence With Friends* Gogol tried to consecrate serfdom in the name of Christ, Belinsky, "reviling" Christ, was of course then nearer to Him than Gogol, the shriven of Christ.

Of the Russian intelligentzia, at times, the same may be said as of Belinsky: as yet it is not with Christ, but Christ is already with it.

We ought not, of course, reassure ourselves with this: He stands at the door and knocks; but if we hear Him not and do not open,—He shall go away to others.

VII

THE "Godlessness" of the Russian intelligentzia is dependent upon a deficiency not of all its entity, but of only some part of it, —not in its feeling, conscience, will; but in its judgment, in the mind, the intellectus, *i. e.*, just that which makes the intelligentzia the intelligentzia.

It may be that this word in itself does not coincide altogether exactly with the sweep of the understanding. The power of the Russian intelligentzia is not in the intellectus, the mind, but in the heart and conscience. Its heart and conscience are nearly always in the right path; the mind often strays. The heart and conscience are free; the mind is bound. The heart and conscience are fearless and "radical"; the mind is timid, and in its very radicalism conservative and imitative. With an excess of social sentiments there is a deficiency of *common ideas*. All these Russian nihilists, materialists, Marxists, idealists, realists,—are only the waves of a spent surge, coming from the North[4] Sea into the Baltic.

[4] Called the German Sea in Russian. TRANS.

"Whatever the last book to him may but say
That on the surface of his soul shall stay."

Just take our Marxists, for instance. There is never a doubt that these are most excellent people. And of course they love the people no less than the nationalists do. But when they talk of the "iron law of economic necessity," they seem the ferocious priests of Marx-Moloch, who are ready to sacrifice the whole Russian nation. And they have talked themselves into the willies. They have become repugnant not only to others, but to themselves as well. And at last, they took their Marx, their little god, by his little leg,—and crash against the ground with him. Or, as another adage has it: a worthless god is licked even by calves,—the Bernstein calves are licking the neglected Marx.

The Marxian cant dragged on and on—and then that of the tramps began to drag.

At first we thought that the tramps, at least, would be an independent phenomenon. But when we looked and listened more carefully, we found that, just as the Russian Marxists were repeating Marx, the German, the Russian tramps also were repeating Nietzsche, the German. The tramps took one half of Nietzsche—our decadents-orgiasts took the other. "Dancing Foot" had not yet had time to hide, before the worshippers of the new Dionysos

began to chant: "Raise higher your dithyrambic legs!" [5] One German cut in two suffices for two Russian *derniers cris.*

Looking upon all these innocent intellectual games side by side with the deepest moral and social tragedy, one wants at times to cry out in involuntary vexation: Hearts of gold, heads of clay!

But the æsthetics is wooden. "Boots above Shakespeare"—no one, of course, will say this in so many words now, but it has stuck somewhere in the sinuosities of our physiology, and, willy-nilly, but it will tell in an "evil eye" against all outward æsthetic form as a useless luxury. Not that we assert directly: the beautiful is immoral; but we are too much accustomed to the moral being ugly; too easily reconciled to this contradiction. If our ethics is "Shakespeare," then our æsthetics is at times really not much above "boots." In any case, Pisarev's "destruction of æsthetics" is, it is to be regretted, deeply national. It is in the nature of Russia, of Great Russia; a grayish sky, grayish weekdays—

"Fir-woods, pines, and sand."

And here, in the mind, the intellectus, as well as

[5] V. Ivanov, The Religion of Dionysos, in *The Problems of Life.*

in the heart and will of our intelligentzia, is the same national leaning toward asceticism, to Dukhoborchestvo; a monkish fear of flesh and blood, a fear of all nakedness and beauty as a temptation of the fiend. Hence—with a truly religious regard for outward, social liberty,—there is a disrespect for inner, personal liberty. And hence the intolerance of the most radical of radicals for schismatics and statute-makers; the mutual eavesdropping, lest some one eat meat at Lent, or become filthy with the filth of the world. And so those without priests are realists, and the idealists believe in priests, and the Theodosians are Marxists, and the Molokan sectarians are nationalists; and every order, every persuasion, eats out of its own bowl, and drinks out of a separate little "image lamp," holding no communion with the heretics. And all have the same fast—an abstract, rationalistic xerophagy. "We taste no meat; we drink no wine."

There is a legend that the holy Seraphim Sarovski subsisted for many years upon *snitka*—a sort of swamp-grass. All these realisms, idealisms, monisms, pluralisms, empiriocriticisms, and other dried "isms" upon which the Russian intelligentzia subsists even to this day are reminiscent of the *snitka* grass.

All faces have become crest-fallen from this intellectual hunger—crest-fallen, and pale, and wan. All are the "gloomy people" of Chekhov. The sun is already rising in their hearts, but "dusk" is still in their thoughts; flaming fire is in their hearts, but a cooling warmth, lukewarm water, a warmed-up German *Habersuppe* in their thoughts; riotous youth in their hearts, but a resigned old age in their thoughts.

At times, looking at these young ancients, these intelligent ascetics and fasters, one longs to cry out:

"Dear Russian youths! You are noble, honest, sincere. You are our hope, you are the salvation and future of Russia. Why, then, are your faces so sad, your eyes so cast down? Be merry, smile; lift up your heads and look the devil straight in the eyes. Fear not the foolish old devil of political reaction, who still glimmers before you, now in heathen æsthetics, now in Christian mysticism. Fear no temptations, no trials, no freedom,—not only external, social freedom, but the inner, personal freedom as well, because without the second the first is also impossible. Fear but one thing: bondage; and the worst of all bondages, that of bourgeoisie, and the worst of all bourgeoisies, that of the rabble; for the slave come into power is a

beast, and the beast come into power is the devil,—no longer the old, the fantastic, but a new, a real devil, truly frightful, more frightful than he is painted,—the coming prince of this world, the "Coming Beast."

VIII

"*OUR struggle is not against the blood and the flesh, but against the powers and authorities, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, the spirits of evil on this earth.*"

And the world ruler of this age is the bourgeoisie coming into power, the Coming Beast.

This Beast in Russia has three faces.

The first—of the present—is over us: the face of autocracy, the dead positivism of bureaucracy, the Chinese Wall of the table of ranks, separating the Russian people from the Russian intelligentzia and the Russian church.

The second face—of the past—alongside of us, is the face of orthodoxy, rendering unto Cæsar that which is God's; that church of which Dostoievsky said that it was in "a paralysis." "Our bishops are so bridled that you can lead them where you will," complained one Russian prelate of the eighteenth century; and modern prelates could say the same with a still greater right. Spiritual bondage is in the very fountain-head of every liberty; spirit-

ual bourgeoisie is in the fountain-head of every nobility. The dead positivism of orthodox bureaucracy is in the service of the positivism of autocratic bureaucracy.

The third face—of the future—is under us; the face of beastliness, coming up from below,—of the hooligans, of trampdom, of the black hundred, —the most fearful of the three faces.

These three beginnings of spiritual bourgeoisie have united against the three beginnings of spiritual nobility: against the land and people,—the living body; against the church,—the living soul; against the intelligentzia,—the living spirit of Russia.

In order that the three beginnings of spiritual nobility and freedom may in their turn unite against the three beginnings of spiritual beastliness and bondage,—a *common idea* is necessary; but such a common idea only a religious regeneration, together with a social regeneration, can give. Neither religion without sociality, nor sociality without religion, but only a *religious sociality* will save Russia.

And, first of all, a religious-social consciousness must awaken where there is already a conscious sociality and an unconscious religiousness—in the Russian intelligentzia, which not only in name but

in its essence must become the intelligence, the intellectus incarnate, that is—the reason, the consciousness of Russia. Reason, carried out to the end, arrives at the idea of God. The intelligentzia, carried out to its end, will arrive at religion.

This seems improbable. But not in vain did the movement for liberation in Russia commence with religion. Not in vain did such people as Novikov, Katazin, and Chaadaev,—as the masons, Martinists and other mystics of the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth,—find themselves in the very closest inner ties with the Decembrists. *This was, and shall be.* Russian sociality was baptized with a religious fire in its infancy, and the same fire will descend upon it at the time of its coming of age, will burst into flame on its brow, like unto the "forked tongue of flame" in the new Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the living spirit of Russia—the Russian intelligentzia. That is why, perhaps, it has found itself even in the total darkness of religious consciousness, in its "Godlessness," because it has made a complete revolution from light to light, from the setting sun to the rising sun, from the First Advent to the Second. For this is verily the path not only of the Russian intelligentzia, but of all Russia—from Christ Come to the Coming Christ.

And when this shall come to pass, the Russian intelligentzia will cease to be the intelligentzia, merely the intelligentzia,—human, merely human, reason; then it shall become the Mind of all Humanity, the Logos of Russia as a member of a universal body of Christ; a new true Church, no longer a temporary, local, Græco-Russian, but an eternal, universal Church of the Coming Lord; the Church of St. Sophia of the Great Wisdom of God; the Church of the Trinity, inseparable and infusible, —the kingdom not only of the Father and the Son, but of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"*Verily, verily this shall be!*"

And in order that this may be, it is necessary to tear apart the union of religion with reaction, a union scoffing at sacred things; it is necessary that men understand, at last, the meaning of this saying, which has become the Flesh:

"*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*" (St. John, viii. 36.)

On to liberty, not against Christ, but with Christ. Christ shall free the world—and none other than Christ. On with Christ—against slavery, the bourgeoisie, and the rabble.

Only the Coming Christ shall conquer the Coming Mob.

THE BLOSSOMS OF BOURGEOISIE

I

MY meetings with Jaurès and France were so fleeting that perhaps it would not be worth while telling about them, if it were not that there is something of the symbolical therein for us and for them; for us Russians and for the Frenchmen—for Europeans in general, perhaps.

To travel is not sufficient—it is necessary to live in Europe to understand our incommensurability with them, not in conceptions merely, or feelings,—but in even the first sensations, in that physics which is the foundation of all metaphysics. We may become acquainted, even; may sympathize with each other; but sooner or later a moment arrives when they cease to understand us and look upon us as the inhabitants of another planet. I say this without pride—on the contrary, with humility: for we must learn much from them, seek help from them in many things—there is no doubt of that; but whether we also can help them in anything—that is as yet doubtful. At any rate, at present they feel no need of us; in their consciousness or un-

consciousness the coming destinies of Europe are not bound up with our destiny; it seems, that if Russia were to go down, they would survive; but if Europe disappear—we perish.

It is difficult, scarcely possible, even, to define in an exact formula this incommensurability, but what stares one in the face is this: they are individualists; we are collectivists. Of course, in a certain sense, European sociality is more perfect than the Russian; but there it has poured into firm, crystal-clear governmental forms; our Russian sociality, however, is as yet unmined ore, or metal boiling in the furnace, which can pour into whatever forms you will, beautiful or monstrous. They are a river in its channel; we are a river at flood-tide. "The rising of rivers like unto seas"—that seems to have been said especially of Russian sociality. Perhaps we may some day find a channel, but at present we have not found it, and it seems that we have well-nigh limitless possibilities—good and evil.

Whether our strength be in that, or our weakness, we yet still believe in a universally historical *breaking off*, in that sudden overturn, the apocalypse of "a new heaven and a new earth," which at one time appeared as in a dream to European sociality also; but there they have long ceased to

believe in it, and now gradation, deliberativeness, and uninterruptedness of development are for them not only the external law of being, but the inner law of the spirit. They are in evolution, we in revolution. They, no matter how much they riot, are submissive; we, no matter how much we submit, are rioting.

But the chiefest feature of our incommensurability with Europe is the hardest of all to express —namely, the religious feature. Simply to say: we have religion, they have not, is immodest; yes, even incorrect, if you will; for if religion is not *already* with us, then *as yet* there is none. But we all, those denying and those affirming, could, in a greater or lesser degree say of ourselves what one Russian decadent has said: "I desire that which is not of this world." Europeans will not say this; they, at any rate, do want that which is of this world. They are in contact with this world; we are in touch with "other worlds than ours." They, when believing, still know; we, when we know, still believe. That is why, even in the most frantic extremes of negation, we appear mystics still; they, even at the very last limits of affirmation, appear skeptics to us.

They and we are not halves of one whole, tne two poles of one force. If we have any preëmi-

nence before them, it is solely in that we have begun to ponder this question before them. We understood that they are necessary to us; they cannot conceive that we might ever be of need to them.

They are "first," we are "last"; but "whosoever . . . will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." It would seem that this is forgotten by them; if we recall it, all shall be well with us.

II

With Jaurès I became acquainted through Andrei Bielyi, who had met him at a little *table d'hôte* in a little *pension* on the quiet Rue Ranelagh, in the quiet Parisian suburb of Auteuil where Bielyi had settled down in my neighborhood. It was just there that Jaurès came to breakfast before the sessions of the Chamber of Deputies. It was at one of these very breakfasts that they fell to talking of Social Democracy, with which our poet, it is known, is captivated, connecting "the coming art" with its triumph. I believe in the Socialism of Bielyi as greatly as in his "Symphonies," these magically beautiful and tenderly insane "songs without words." Be that as it may, only that superficial sociability of the New Athens made possible a conversation such as the

one of the two "comrades"—the young Russian symbolist and the venerable leader of French Social Democracy.

When I entered the idyllically bourgeois dining room on the lower floor of the little Ranelaghian *pension,* where the air seemed to be growing darker and thicker from the old, old smell of dishes, I saw at the far end of the empty and long table Jaurès with two or three "comrades"—his inseparable retinue, they must have been,—and with Andrei Bielyi.

A stout man of fifty arose to meet me; slightly unwieldy and slow, not of great height, with the stiff bristles of his hair and beard a reddish gray; the skin on his face ruddy, as if weather-beaten; with a prominently projecting chin, and simple and kind eyes of a pale blue. Either the senior cashier of an insurance company, or a teacher of German in a Russian high-school. Nothing of lightness, of the South, of the Latin. Teutonic ponderosity and solidity. Not well cut but strongly sewn.

Almost immediately after we had settled down, we began talking of the Russian Revolution.

From the first words of my companion in conversation I sensed his curiosity of one who looks out upon a shipwreck from the safety of a harbor.

Whether Russia free herself, or remain in bondage, he, Jaurès, would be neither hot nor cold. I also felt that he spoke of the revolution not as a seaman would speak of the sea, but as a geographer might.

"At the present time in Russia the Cadets are the only party which has a feeling of the real political possibilities. All that is more extreme than that is insane. Your extremists are either fanatics or dreamers, living in a kingdom of chimeras. One cannot but wonder at their heroism. But the wonder is mingled with a feeling of sadness, and—forgive me—of vexation. Everything with you Russians is an impulse. You are ready to jump out of the window and break your necks, instead of descending by the stairs. You can die better than you can live. . . ."

"And you Europeans—can both die and live?" I asked with an involuntary smile.

"Live well, die well," he parried, with that innocent and amiable self-satisfaction which disarms.

A few months back I had heard his speech at a "protest meeting" at the Winter Circus, occasioned by the Bielostok pogrom, with a crowd of thousands of Russian revolutionaries and French workingmen. He spoke of human rights, of the great covenants of the French Revolution; of the universal

brotherhood of nations,—of everything that at one time was of moment, even here in Europe, but now has long since become the music of words. Jaurès is an inspired orator. For an hour and a half, without a breathing space, he shouted, he roared, he bellowed, he thundered—a veritable Zeus the Thunderer. But somehow just then I recalled the saying of Grigorievitch about the late Stasov: "A Vesuvius, erupting cotton." I can easily imagine that in the Chamber this florid, inflated eloquence explodes like a punctured bladder under the sharply pointed needles of Clemenceau.

I looked my neighbors over; French workingmen —simple, honest, kindly faces, that one cannot but love. Attentive, compassionate, almost reverential; just like people in a church at prayer, listening to an organ. But just as those who in our day pray in church will not go on a crusade, so these people will not go in for a revolution. The common face of the crowd—the face of the bourgeois republic—is that of imperturbable, invincible bourgeoisie: "we desire that which is of this world; a bit at a time, and quiet-like, we'll build up a kingdom of heaven on earth—smooth and easy does it." Something unshakeable, absolute; a stronghold of strongholds; a "present eternity"—scarcely any other save the same in which Hertzen saw a portent

of a "European China." When I bethought me of the police agents placed near the doors of the hall, I felt like laughing. Why the police? To quiet whom? The Russian revolutionaries, perhaps; but even they had become weaker, quieter, dissolved in this crowd like acid in lye. What revolution can there be here! Water was never made to burn, bourgeoisie was never made to riot.

Coming out of the meeting, I got out of one meeting into another. At the Place de Republique, on occasion of a holiday, a carnival had been arranged, with show-booths and carrousels with music. The night was calm, warm; with a full moon in the cloudless sky. But in the blindingly white electric light, like the light of day, the luminary of night seemed to be extinguished. In one of the carrousels, instead of horses, gigantic pigs were going around; the little tails curled into little rings; the pink, bare bodies seeming alive; the snouts with teeth bared, as if in laughter; and with cunning in their little eyes, as if they knew something, but did not want to tell. The music was playing a military march, and with a vertiginous speed the men, women, and children were whirling around astride the pigs. They, as well as the pigs, were laughing. Suddenly, I fancied the same thing that I had fancied there, at the meeting: here

was some limit attained; an eternity arrived, calm and smooth waters, God's bounty of a "Median Kingdom," of a "heaven on earth." A sadness, as though in a dream, contracted my heart. Something eerie, ominous, of the apocalyptic, was in this black crowd and the light of nocturnal suns extinguishing the light of the moon, and in the rosily-naked, laughing swine. "All this has been before, only I cannot recall when." Or will it be?

"Yes, you can die, but live you cannot," Jaurès had repeated in conclusion of our conversation about the Russian revolution.

Then we spoke of French Social Democracy—I cannot now recall what, but the chief impression which remained with me was the same as on that evening at the Bielostok meeting: of a socialism without a revolution—a lion without claws; a socialism digested in the ostrich-like stomach of bourgeoisie; a socialism which is the extinguished lava of a volcano, that nurtures the plump clusters of *Lacrima Christi* in the earthly paradise of bourgeoisie.

III

In the *salon* of a certain French authoress of Russian origin, Ivan Strannik, who has long lived

in Paris, and who, it would seem, is the only one in that city who attempts to unite oil with water—the Russians with the French,—I became acquainted with Anatole France. The amiable hostess had invited the famous guest especially for me. But, through unpardonable Russian barbarism, I was late and arrived after France.

Do you recollect, in one of Chekhov's stories, that delicate boy, resembling a girl, who moved softly, who had a soft voice, soft, flaxen curls, soft, tender eyes, a soft, little velvet jacket? France reminds one of this boy of Chekhov's. As soft as soft can be, caressingly downy, tenderly velvety. When you gaze at him for long, it is as if you were passing your hand over silver-gray velvet. But the impression of this inward softness does not exclude an external distinctness, a firmness of countenance as exquisite as if it were carved. The silver-gray head, splendid with the splendor of age; the noble profile, that might have been struck off on an ancient Florentine medal. The kind, old courtiers, of the kind, old King Henry the Fourth would be like that.

With me were my friends, also Russians; with France, his inseparable friend of many years, a very clever woman of the world in the spirit of the eighteenth century, half Jewess, half French.

Their mutual *salon* is at her house. France is married, but no one knows his wife.

The hostess tried to start the conversation rolling about Russian literature, about Tolstoy and Dostoievsky. But, as it proved, France was indifferent to Tolstoy, and did not like Dostoievsky. Out of politeness he did not say this, but it could be surmised that Russian mysticism was not to his, a perfect classic's, liking, and seemed almost nothing else but "bad taste." The conversation did not get along well. In vain did the charming hostess throw little rainbow-bridges across the gulf separating us; we could not step upon them, and fell through.

It would also seem, however, that France does not willingly converse with, or listen to, others; but then, he loves to listen to himself. And, indeed, one would scarcely have the courage to reproach him for it. When he speaks, one listens and cannot have his fill, as if in his throat were a Stradivarius, or that nightingale which, in Andersen's fairy-tale, beguiled the death throes of the Chinese emperor. Of whatever trifles he may speak, his speech is a dainty for the gods; whatever bitter truths he may utter, they, from his lips, are full of ambrosial sweetness. But when one recalls what has been said, one sees that it is almost nothing, over almost nothing; everything melts like foam—but is it not

that foam out of which was born the goddess of eternal beauty?

In reference to the collection of his political speeches, he confessed that the delivery of even the shortest speech before a gathering is for him a veritable torture; that several days before, he already worries, loses his presence of mind, and, stepping upon the platform, becomes as timid as a schoolboy.

"Alas, I am not born an orator!" he concluded with jocose plaintiveness.

"Why, then, do you torture yourself?"

"What can I do? One must serve the common good in some way."

"Socialism?" asked the hostess, winking at us.

"Well, yes, of course. But you, it seems, do not believe in my socialism?"

"Not altogether."

"Why?"

"Why, even because you are the greatest of all skeptics who have ever been in this world, for one thing," some one of us took up the conversation. "For how can one unite the doubt with the deed? How do anything, not believing in what one does?"

"One may not be able to do; but one may play," retorted France. "The struggle of the political parties is for me a titanic game of chess. But

are not all the deeds of mankind games? The gods play with us—in that lies our tragedy; let us, then, play with the gods—it may be that then our tragedies will end in an idyll. He who has lost faith in everything, derives the innocent ease and delight of divine games from everything. 'Oh, how sweet it is to rest upon the pillow of doubts!' "

The infinite charm with which he pronounced these words of Montaigne's I shall never forget.

Yes, I thought, everything in play, a smile for everything, doubt in everything—that is the final wisdom of bourgeoisie. Contemplation corresponds to action, France corresponds to Jaurès. Just as once upon a time the political insurrection transformed itself into bourgeois liberalism, so now the social-economic revolution will transform itself into bourgeois socialism. Evolution is stronger than revolution, the calm is stronger than the storm: herein is the unconquered truth of bourgeoisie—unconquerable, it may even be, on that plane where the battle is being waged. Clemenceau would have understood France; France would have reconciled Clemenceau with Jaurès.

What is in one, that also is in all; what is on top, that is also at the bottom. There, on the Place de Republique, in the black crowd and the pinkly-naked, laughing pigs is the deep, rich soil, the

unctuous manure; while here is the fragrant blossom, like a mystic rose of bourgeoisie.

Absolute bourgeoisie is absolute swinishness. After all, is that not so? All the golden harvest of culture—science, art, sociality,—has it not sprung up from the bourgeoisie manure? Is there not a righteous, wise, kind,—*holy*—bourgeoisie? Who has not cursed it, and who has conquered it?

Only too frequently now in Russia is European bourgeoisie denied by us, not in the name of a new nobility and a new culture, but in the name of the old Russian barbarism, and the new Russian hooliganism. But if it is necessary to choose the lesser of two evils, then, if you will, bourgeoisie is better than hooliganism.

At times it seems that the Russian revolutionary sociality has given the oath of a Hannibal, to conquer or perish in the struggle with the bourgeoisie of the cultured South—having no *power given from above* thereto. It is time, at last, to think of that power, to understand that the religious shallowness of bourgeoisie can be conquered only through spiritual nobility.

We believe that it shall alight upon Russian sociality, and if then Russia proved opposed to Europe, let us be so. We are opposed to Europeans; it may be that even at that time it will come

to pass, that the last shall be first, not that they may rear up above all others, but that they may serve unto all.

WHEN CHRIST SHALL RISE AGAIN

"IN this land of ours, rather than in any other, will the Glorious Resurrection of Christ be celebrated. Is that a dream? But why does this dream come to no one else but the Russian? What does it mean, in reality, that the holiday itself has disappeared, while the visible signs of it are so plainly borne upon the face of our land: that the words 'Christ is risen!' are spoken, along with the kiss, and every time just as triumphantly approaches the holy midnight, and the pealings of resounding bells ring on and on over all the earth, as though they were awakening us? Where the signs are borne so manifestly, not in vain are they borne; where men are called, they shall awake."

Thus Gogol, whose birthday falls on the Holiday of Glory:—can it be in order that, dead, the eternally living one may tell us anew that which he has said when living, heeded of none? Can it be that now also we shall not heed?

"No, this age is not the one to celebrate the Glorious Holiday as it ought to be celebrated," he concludes.

Why, then, not celebrate it? Why, indeed, this holiday which does not fall on a holiday? Why has it vanished, as though it were forever eclipsed?

Do you remember, in our childhood it seemed to us that on this day the sun in heaven sparkled as on none of the other days in the year? Why, then, does it grow dim and tarnished, as though the light had gone out of our eyes? Why do "the pealings of resounding bells" ring on and on above us not with holiday pealing, but as though tolling? The lips pronounce: "Christ is risen!" the lips reply: "Verily is He risen;" but the heart keeps silence, —the heart keeps silence: is it because, even though He be risen, He is still not risen for us?

"I know that people who commit crimes which they call executions will not hear, because they do not want to hear that which I am crying out, that which I am beseeching them: but still I will not cease to cry out, to beseech always about the one and only thing till the last minute by my life," says Tolstoy, in his recent essay: *Christianity and Capital Punishment.*

"Liev Nikolaievitch begs to write you that Jukovski's essay on capital punishment is known to him, and has always aroused his indignation.—Liev Nikolaievitch thinks that you have done well indeed in recalling to the memory of readers this old,

horrible scoffing at sacred things," writes Tolstoy's secretary, in a private letter in reference to a certain essay on capital punishment, also a recent one. And at the end of the letter Tolstoy himself adds, in an aged, weakening hand:

"During the last few days I feel myself very weak from renewed ill-health—in reality, from age; but I want to write you myself, if only a few words, in gratitude for your essay, and, especially, for your fine letter. I try, as much as I can and may, to struggle with this evil of the representation of a churchly lie in place of the truth of Christianity, which you point out; but I think that liberation from falsehood is reached not through the pointing out of the falsehood of falsehood, but through a full adoption of truth—such an adoption wherein truth becomes the sole, or even the chief guide of life. . . ."

Alone, amid a silence as of the grave, he is crying out, his voice sinking lower and lower, as if, in reality, "a soaped rope had been thrown around his old neck." He is crying out, and will cry out to the last minute of his life, repeating always the same words, stubbornly, wearily monotonously, hopelessly, almost senselessly, almost dully: "This is horrible, horrible, horrible! . . . Yes, the attitude of Christian humanity at present is horrible!

. . . It is not good to kill one another! . . ."

"To murder for murder," says Dostoievsky, "is a punishment immeasurably greater than the crime itself. Murder under a sentence is immeasurably more horrible than murder by a cut-throat; here all final hope, with which it is ten times easier to die, is taken away *by certainty;* here is a sentence, and precisely in that there is certainly no escape lies all the horrible torture—and there is no torture more powerful in all the world. Who has said that the nature of man is capable of enduring this without insanity? Wherefore this revilement,—hideous, unnecessary, futile? Of this torture and of this horror even Christ has spoken. No, man cannot be treated thus."

"We in Russia have no capital punishment," rejoices Dostoievsky, never suspecting what mockery these words would become forty years after.

"The priest was reading the prayers in a low voice. Two other assistants approached, nimbly took the waistcoat off Tropman, put his hands behind his back, tied them together, crosswise, and wound the whole body up with straps. . . . Tropman submissively bent his head. The priest drawled out the words of the prayer. . . . I could not take my gaze off the slender, youthful neck. . . . The imagination involuntarily drew a trans-

versal line upon it. . . . 'Right there,' I thought, 'in a few moments, dismembering the vertebrae, cleaving muscles and veins, a thirty pound axe will go through. . . .' I saw how a headsman suddenly grew up on the left side of the guillotine platform; I saw how Tropman made his way up the steps. . . . How he halted at the top, how from the right and left two men pounced upon him, just like spiders upon a fly, how he suddenly fell down head first, and how his heels gave a kick. . . . But here I turned away and began to wait, while the ground started quietly floating underfoot. . . . Ensued a breathless pause. . . . Then something roared dully and rolled on—heaved a sigh. . . . As if an enormous beast had coughed. . . . Everything became confused. . . ." [6]

Everything has become confused, has grown dark in our eyes also. The Glorious Resurrection has grown dark as well.

That is why the holiday does not fall on a holiday to us. We can not, we do not want to, we must not, celebrate the Resurrection of Him Who Died, where the putting to death of the living takes place. Christ can not arise where Christ is still being crucified. One can not sing "Christ is risen!" with the same lips which clamor "Crucify

[6] TURGENIEV, *The Execution of Tropman* (1870).

Him!" For what is every new execution among mankind if not a new crucifixion of the Son of God? Is not the execution of Him who was executed for all repeated in the execution of all the executed?

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." I was upon the headsman's block, and ye knew me not.

It will be said that it is scoffing at sacred things to compare Christ with evil-doers. But did not the people shout about Him also: "Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas"? Was not He also crucified between two thieves, *and numbered with the transgressors?*

What is the cross save a Roman engine of execution—the same as the French guillotine, the Russian gallows? Wherefore did He die upon the cross if not to make the engine of execution the engine of salvation? *Through Death He vanquished Death*—does it not mean that through capital punishment of himself he vanquished capital punishment—annulled, abolished, destroyed it for all eternity? But if it is necessary to execute after Him, it means that He has died and is not yet

risen; it means—that the cross is still an engine of execution, "the accursed wood," and that "accursed is he who is upon the wood."

Where a gallows rears up, the cross is laid low. In place of the Cross of God is the Cross of Anti-Christ—the gallows.

From this very cross of Anti-Christ a black shadow has stretched over all Russia; from it as well has the sun of the Resurrection grown dim. It is as if the "pealings of resounding bells" are ringing out: "Christ is *not risen!*"—and our heart answers: *"Verily is He not risen!"* "Easter is radiant!" chants the Church—but to us it seems that rather it is ruddy with blood.

Shall we ask, Wherefore the blessing of God is not over us, as though God had abjured us, and Holy Russia become as though accursed? Here is the cup of wrath in the hand of the Lord; the wine is seething within it, full of confusion, and He pours out of it for us; even its lees we shall press out and drink. Calamity upon calamity, disgrace upon disgrace, Tsushima upon Tsushima.[7] It seems as if we could not fall any lower, but still are we falling. Wherefore? Is it not because we are so used to the sight of blood, to the cry of

[7] An island in Korea Strait; scene of a naval battle disastrous to the Russians during the Russo-Japanese War. TRANS.

blood, that we no longer see, no longer hear, this infamy of infamies? . . .

And still we dare talk of "Great Russia," of the "honest, kind face of our nation,"—dare to ask where it has gone, why it is not to be seen. The headsman has bent it down to the block—that is why it is not to be seen.

That it is horrible and repulsive to eat human flesh ought not be proven to man. Just so it ought not be proven that capital punishment is horrible and repulsive, that "murder under sentence is immeasurably more horrible than murder by a cut-throat."

A common murder destroys the religious life of the murderer; capital punishment destroys the religious life of the entire nation. Executing one, we are executing all; killing the body of one, we are killing the soul of all. Who, then, has done this thing to us? Who is guilty?

Let us not, accusing others, justify ourselves. There is none righteous, all are guilty,—both I, who write, and thou, who readest this,—all are guilty. With blood is bought the life we live, with blood is permeated the air we breathe, with blood is wetted the bread we eat, with blood is mixed the water we drink. We know, we see this; others are

blind, or will not see. The seeing are more criminal; the blind are unhappier.

Nor let them say to us that capital punishment is necessary for the salvation of Russia. If it were necessary, let us say, to crucify Christ anew in order to save Russia, would we crucify Him?—At this day, at least,—at this day we believe that we would not crucify Him.

"Wherefore this holiday which has lost its meaning?" asks Gogol. "Wherefore does it come anew to summon more and more faintly parted people into one family, and, having called out sadly, departs like one unknown and a stranger to all? Is it truly unknown and a stranger to all? But why, then, have people survived in some places, to whom it seems as though they grew brighter on this day, and who celebrate their infancy, that infancy whose celestial kiss, like the kiss of eternal spring, pours upon the soul? . . . Wherefore is all this, and to what end?—This: that some, though even a few, who still sense the breath of spring in this holiday, may suddenly grow exceedingly pensive, as pensive as an angel in heaven is pensive, and that they may cry out with a heart-rending cry, and fall down at the feet of their brethren, beseeching them to snatch out this one day, at least, out of the rank of

the others; for one day, at least, to embrace and clasp a man as a guilty friend embraces a generous friend who has forgiven him all. . . . Even to wish thus, even as though compelling one's self to do this, to seize upon this as a man drowning seizes upon a board! God knows, perhaps for this wish alone there is a ladder all ready to be thrown down to us from heaven and a hand stretched out to help us fly up on it."

Yea, it may not be in vain that upon the day of the Resurrection the risen Gogol newly, as of yore, falls at our feet and cries out with a heart-rending cry:

"Even to wish thus!"

There is in man an omnipotent will, there is a faith in miracles, which of itself is already a miracle. Let us wish, then, with such a will; let us believe with such a faith in the miracle of the Resurrection of Christ, in the miracle of a resurrection of Russia.

Let us not implore: "Annul it!"—but with Christ, who vanquished death through death, Who annulled execution through execution, let us annul capital punishment ourselves.

And then only shall we celebrate the Glorious Holiday; then only will the sun begin to sparkle in

heaven, and the pealings of resounding bells will ring out: Christ is risen!

And all Russia will answer:

Verily is He risen!

THE END

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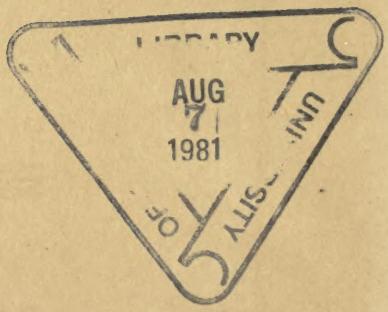
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